

RealSports

FOOTBALL





GETTING STARTED

GLoad the football cartridge into your ATARI Home Computer as explained in your computer owner's guide, and turn on your computer. Plug joysticks into Controller Jacks 1 and 2.

Press **OPTION** to choose the game variation you want: A one-player practice game versus the computer or two players opposing each other. Press **SELECT** to choose between a short game (6-minute quarters) and a full-length game (15-minute quarters).

Press **START** to call the players of both teams onto the field. Pressing **START** during a game restarts the game at the beginning.

Press the space bar on your computer to pause during a game. To resume play, press the space bar again.

Press **SYSTEM RESET** if you want to select new game options and start a new game.



GAME PLAY

GIf you know the basic rules of football, then you're well on your way to becoming an ATARI Football superstar.

As in real football, your goal in a two-player game of ATARI RealSports Football is to outscore your opponent. You accomplish this by scoring touchdowns (worth seven points, since the extra point is added automatically), field goals (three points), and safeties (two points). You can also play a one-player practice game that helps you master the key features, particularly passing, of ATARI RealSports Football.

As in a real game, you must go 10 yards in four plays for a first down or your offense loses the ball. You can run, pass, catch, and kick (both field goals and punts). And you can make tackles, sack the quarterback, and intercept passes on defense.

But in ATARI RealSports Football there are a few rule changes that you need to know about before you can go on to gridiron glory.

First, there are no kickoffs—the home team (joystick 1) starts with the ball at its own 20-yard line at the beginning of a game. After a



touchdown or successful field goal, the team scored upon takes possession of the ball at its 20. After a safety, the scoring team takes possession of the ball at the 50.

There are no penalties and—fortunately—no injuries. Each team has six players; you control one player on your team with your joystick. Under certain circumstances (explained in TRANSFERRING JOYSTICK CONTROL), you can transfer your control from one player to another. Knowing when to do this can mean the difference between winning and losing, as you'll see.

A scoreboard complete with official clock is at the top of your screen. In addition to showing the quarter, down, and yards needed for a first down, the scoreboard displays instructions for playing the game. Instructions for the home team (in orange jerseys, controlled by joystick 1) appear on the left of the scoreboard; instructions for the visiting team (in blue jerseys, controlled by joystick 2) appear on the right. (Jersey colors may vary from one TV set to another.)

The scoreboard clock runs twice as fast as normal. As in real football, the clock stops after interceptions, incomplete passes, kicks, scores, changes of possession, dead balls, and out-of-bounds plays, then starts again when play resumes. The clock also stops after a running play, then starts again when the defense selects its next play. If the offense doesn't choose a play within 15 seconds, however, the clock stops again and doesn't start until the ball is snapped. This eliminates stall tactics, and makes for a more exciting game.

A sideline marker shows the down, the line of scrimmage, the direction the offense is moving, and the yard line the offense must reach for a first down. The down marker is the same color as the offensive team: orange for the home team, blue for the visitors.



S ELECTIONG FORMATIONS AND PLAYS

You control all aspects of play—selection of formations and plays as well as player movement (running, passing, kicking, and tackling)—with your joystick and fire button. As the accompanying playchart shows, you can choose from 15 offensive and five defensive plays when plotting your game strategy.

When playing a one-player practice game against the computer, you don't try to outscore the computer. Instead, you play offense for both teams in alternation—switching from one joystick to the other—while also calling the defensive plays for the computer (although the computer controls the movement of the defense when each play begins). This helps you learn the formations and plays without worrying about winning or losing. Although you're playing alone, you still need two joysticks: When you lose the ball on downs, throw an interception, punt, or turn the ball over on a missed field goal, just alternate from one joystick to the other to play offense for the other team—using the opposite joystick to pick the defensive plays for the computer. To keep the plays and formations in proper perspective, don't forget to turn the playcard around each time you switch from one joystick to another.

Offense

All 15 offensive plays are executed from one of three formations (check your playchart for exact player positioning).

Follow this two-step procedure to select an offensive play:

- In response to **OFF: PICK FORMATION** on the scoreboard, hold your joystick in the appropriate position for the offensive alignment you want: forward for formation No. 1, right for formation No. 2, and backward for formation No. 3, then press the fire button.



When the scoreboard prompts you to **PICK PLAY**, repeat the above step: move the joystick forward for play No. 1, to your right for play No. 2, backward for play No. 3, to your left for play No. 4, and to the center (straight up and down) position for play No. 5, then press the fire button.

To select play 1-3, for example, move the joystick forward and press the fire button in response to the prompt. Then move the joystick backward and press the fire button again, and the players will run to their assigned positions on the field, ready for the snap.

You can run or pass on all but two offensive plays. You can't run or pass after selecting the field goal play, and you can't pass on the punt play—although you can fake a punt and try to run for a first down.

Defense

On defense, you can line up in five formations in your attempt to thwart the offense (see your playchart for the players' exact positions):

Formation 1

For a tight line to defend against an up-the-middle run or medium passes, move the joystick to the forward position and press the fire button.

Formation 2

For a spread-out line and "prevent" pass coverage (with the defensive backs 10 yards off the line of scrimmage), move the joystick to your right and press the fire button.

Formation 3

For a five-man line—good for both field goal and pass-blitzing defense—move the joystick backward and press the fire button.

Formation 4

For short-pass coverage and goal line stands, move the joystick to your right and press the fire button.

Formation 5

For punt defense, move the joystick to the center position and press the fire button.



P LAYER MOVEMENT

You can control the movement of only the odd-colored control player—generally, the quarterback on offense, the middle linebacker on defense. The control players are the “specialists”—the quarterbacks, receivers, kickers, kick returners, and key defenders. With some practice, you’ll soon learn how to use their talents—running, passing, kicking, and receiving—and how to transfer joystick control from one player to another using your joystick and fire button.

OFFENSE

Passing

To pass the football successfully, you must learn to coordinate your joystick movements with the pressing and releasing of the fire button **and** the motion of the pass receiver. Study the plays on your playchart and you’ll see that the receivers run set pass patterns for each play: one receiver always runs routes to the top of the screen, the other receiver to the bottom.

You pass the football by first moving the joystick to the appro-

priate position—forward for the receiver at the top of your TV screen, backward for the receiver at the bottom of your screen—and pressing, then releasing the fire button to throw the ball. Your chances of completing a pass are greatest when you release the fire button as the receiver arrives at one of the “cut points,” indicated by dots on the playchart. When the receivers finish their prearranged routes, they head back toward the line of scrimmage, and it becomes increasingly difficult to complete a pass to them.

Once the receivers have completed their prescribed routes, the defensive backs are no longer required to “shadow” them and are free to go after the ball. The defensive backs also become faster than the receivers, increasing the chances of an interception. Interceptions are most likely to occur when a defensive player is directly between the quarterback and the receiver, **and** within two yards of the receiver.

Becoming an expert passer—particularly learning the receivers' pass patterns—requires time and practice. Work at the one-player game against the computer to perfect your passing skills.

Field Goals

When you want to kick a field goal, use your joystick to select formation 3, play 1. After it's snapped, the ball is automatically kicked toward the goal posts. How accurate the kick is depends on how close the line of scrimmage is to the end zone. Your chances of kicking a field goal are equal to those of the pros, since the percentages shown on the back of the playchart are drawn from a full National Football League season's statistics.

The defense can blitz a field goal and occasionally block the kick. If the kick is blocked (or if it fails), the ball is returned to the original line of scrimmage or to the 20-yard line if the ball was kicked from inside that point, and the opposing team then takes possession.

Punting/Punt Returns

When it's "fourth and long" and you don't think you can get a first down or kick a field goal, use your joystick to select formation 2, play 1 to punt. After the ball is snapped, press your fire button and the ball will be kicked downfield.

If you wait too long before punting, the onrushing defenders can block the kick. When this occurs, the ball is blown dead and returned to the original line of scrimmage (even if the punt is blocked in the end zone), where the opposing team then takes possession.

If the defense has selected formation 5 in a punting situation, the computer automatically guides the deep safety to the ball after the kick, then turns control of the safety over to the receiving player's joystick when the safety picks up the ball.

DEFENSE

With the exception of the control player, defensive players all have assigned roles when the ball is snapped. Linemen, naturally, chase the ball carrier wherever he goes. Defensive backs follow the eligible pass receivers during their pass routes, then move toward the ball.

The defensive control player is generally the middle linebacker. You can move the defensive control player around before the ball is snapped by moving your joystick button. If he touches the line of scrimmage, however, he's frozen until the ball is snapped.

Once a play begins, you can move the defensive control player wherever you want on the field—send him in on a blitz, drop him back as another pass defender, or move him laterally along the line to stop a run.

Transferring Joystick Control

You can transfer control from one player to another by pressing the fire button—but remember, you can do this **only once each play**, so it's as important to know **when** to switch control as it is to know **how** to switch control.

On offense, you can switch control only from the quarterback to the receivers. The receiver automatically becomes the control player after catching a pass from the quarterback. But you can also switch control to the receiver **before** the ball reaches him; this way, you can adjust his position and improve the chance of a completion. To transfer control from the quarterback to a receiver, press the fire button after you've thrown the pass.

On defense, you can transfer control to the player nearest the ball carrier in the following situations:

- *After the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage.*
- *As soon as a pass is completed.*

In addition, the computer automatically transfers control for you after you've intercepted a pass and as soon as you've picked up a punt.

When you're playing a one-player game against the computer, the computer automatically transfers control to the defensive player nearest the ball carrier once he's crossed the line of scrimmage.



S **STRATEGY**

Changing Plays

In ATARI RealSports Football, as in real football, both teams can change plays, or "call an audible," at the line of scrimmage. After the teams line up, the scoreboard gives both sides the chance to **CHANGE PLAY?** You change plays just as you normally select a play: move the joystick to the appropriate position, then press the fire button. You must respond quickly, however, because the ball is snapped just eight seconds after the lineup.

The defense can change formation, while the offense can change its play but not its formation. For example, if the original offensive play is 1-3, it can be switched to play 1-2 or 1-4, but not to 2-1.

Player Running Speed

As in real football, certain players in ATARI RealSports Football are faster than others. Knowing which player is fastest in a particular situation can be a deciding factor in a close game.

While running their patterns, the receivers are the fastest players on the field, but lose that advantage once they catch a pass. And once they finish their routes without catching a pass, they're no faster than the linemen, the slowest players on the field.

The defensive control player is the next quickest, followed by the offensive control player, the defensive safeties who cover the receivers, and then the linemen and receivers who've completed their pass patterns.

So unless a ball carrier is significantly ahead of a pursuing defensive control player or shows some fancy footwork, he'll eventually be tackled from behind in a long race for the end zone. A bit of razzle-dazzle can help you on offense: in open-field running, try guiding your ball carrier diagonally across the field—with occasional cuts toward the other sideline—rather than straight toward the goal line.



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